

Cost Share Approach to Forest Thinning

CSP in previous years was often misunderstood as too severe of a prescription to forest thinning because it did not take into account other factors that effect the final appearance of a project. To-day a more logical approach considers tree arrangement, natural landscape objectives (things that would allow more trees to stay) and potential insect and pathogen issues (things that would kill trees after the thinning is done). These changes still achieve the fire hazard reduction and ecological restoration objectives of this program.

Restoration prescriptions seek to re-establish the natural park like structure from the 1800s. Historical records and research shows that our forests in the Southwest were characterized by clumps of trees and openings with 70-80% of the landscape consisting of large grassy meadows. The grasses and wildflowers provided important wildlife habitat as well as surface fuels required for frequent, low intensity fires. These fires served to prevent pine population irruptions that would create, dense, less biologically diverse stands. Dense stands of trees did not exist across the landscape. (except for the possibility of seedlings and saplings at times, which were then reduced by frequent wildfires.



CSP specifitcations allow more snow to reach the ground and melt instead of evaporating from treetops



CSP allows for “clumps and openings” arrangement of trees and grasses

Today’s dense stands often result from species like White fir and different junipers invading the areas between tree clumps, into meadows and grasslands, then multiplying and growing to become large trees. These invasions result from years of fire suppression creating better growing conditions for the invaders. The resulting tree arrangement has the potential to alter or eliminate important niche ecosystems called ecotones. Ecotones create important habitat for some animal and plant species. Retaining varying sized trees and various species in a clump and opening arrangement maximizes ecosystem health, has a natural landscape visual appeal and reduces wildfire hazard.

This approach to forest restoration has allowed the general public to accept the new CSP prescriptions easier and more often. As federal, state, tribal and local agencies and private land owners work towards similar goals, our forest lands can be returned to a healthier, more manageable state. In addition, our communities become more fire safe and make it easier for firefighters to do their job.

For More Information Contact:
Village of Ruidoso Forestry (575) 257-5544
421 Wingfield Street, 8AM–5PM Mon-Fri
www.ruidoso-nm.gov

State of New Mexico Forestry (575) 354-2231
www.nmforestry.com

Smokey Bear Ranger District (575) 257-4095
www.fs.fed.us/r3

County of Lincoln (575) 258-9991
www.lincolncountynm.net

Village of Ruidoso Fire Department (575) 257-4116
www.ruidoso-nm.gov/Fire Dept

Village of Ruidoso Solid Waste Department
(575) 257-1502



Firewise www.firewise.org/



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Wildlife habitat trees are allowed and encouraged to be retained

Cost Share Program

What is it ? The Cost Share Program (CSP) is a financial assistance grant program that helps property owners pay for tree thinning. CSP emphasizes ecological restoration objectives that maximizes tree growth and ecosystem diversity. Qualifying for the grant is based on how many trees are on the property and not the finances of the property owner. Village Forestry offers a free assessment to determine qualification.

CSP reimburses landowners, within the Village of Ruidoso, for thinning forest areas on their property and creating defensible space around structures. CSP offers a reimbursement for up to 70% of your cost. Maximum reimbursement is \$805.00/acre for vacant lots and \$1,190.00 for lots with structures.

Ruidoso has applied for and received these grants since 2001. They provide a great incentive to reduce wildfire hazard around your home and promote forest health!

Call, click or come by for more information.

Do I qualify ? DEFENSIBLE SPACE or FOREST THINNING

Reimbursement program

The land owner gets reimbursed after the work has been completed to program specifications, the job has been inspected by Village Forestry and the contractor involved has been fully paid. Ideally, it was meant to be a 70/30 split but rarely is ever 70% of your cost given Ruidoso's difficult terrain. This means the grant will pay 7 of 10 dollars of cost within a funding matrix established by the grant. The property owner pays 3 of 10 dollars or the balance, whichever is greater, and may perform in-kind service (you do some work).

Two basic types of projects: DEFENSIBLE SPACE or FOREST THINNING

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

This is for properties of an acre or less with a structure on it. The most this type of project reimburses is \$1190.00. That will be with receipts of \$1700.00 or more. If the cost is over that amount, it will be the responsibility of the land owner to pay the difference.

FOREST THINNING

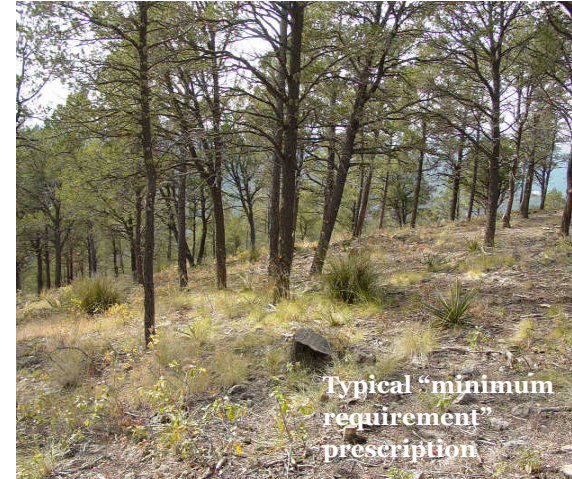
This type of project is for properties that are greater than an acre, or small acreage without structures. The maximum amount of reimbursement will be \$805.00 per acre showing receipts for \$1150.00. Properties with < one acre will be reimbursed the full \$805.00 and larger acreage will be paid at \$805.00 per acre.

Requirements Include:

- Removing the trees, which do not have a **blue paint “leave” tree mark**. The special tree paint disappears over time.
- Pruning remaining trees to six (6) feet above ground and smaller trees to 25% of their height.
- Removing or relocating firewood and other combustible material to at least 30 feet away from all structures.
- Removing forest litter and debris from all structures 75 feet or to the property line, whichever is first. Cleaning gutters, roofs and under porches of forest debris.

Slash treatments include:

- If slopes > 40% exist, Forestry may approve *lopping and scattering* to two feet in height— all tree lengths are cut to 4' lengths.
- All scrub oak cut from the drip line of leave tree.
- All boles (logs) cut to 3' lengths.
- Chipping but spreading of chips not > 2" deep.
- Haul slash to curbside for Village grapple truck removal.
- All large properties must have complete removal from 120 feet of property line.



Important Note:

There must not be any changes in the trees to be cut unless approved by the forester. Leave trees that are cut could result in not getting a reimbursement or certificate of compliance.



How do I get Started ?

Qualifying for the cost share program has nothing to do with your financial status. Village Forestry targets the current implementation area where we offer CSP on a first come first serve basis. Call Forestry to see where we are working. Landowners should be proactive in getting started as soon as possible if their property is in a new implementation area. This will assure that funds from the current grant are not depleted before you call our office (grants run in cycles). A forester will meet the landowner on the property and determine if there is enough work on the property to qualify for CSP.

Follow This procedure:

- Schedule an appointment to meet with a forester on your property. Call us at 257-5544.
- A meeting with our forester to assess the property, explain this program in detail, and secure signatures from the landowners agreeing with the terms and conditions explained.
- He/she will mark trees to remain in blue paint.
- Property owner contacts thinning contractors to do the work or decides to do it themselves.
- Contractor or landowner will call and schedule a final inspection with the office manager.
- Forester reviews the work and passes or explains additional work to be completed.
- Property owner submits receipts for reimbursement.
- Reimbursement process takes 30-60 days.